

**Public Schools Branch**

**Review of Schools Report**  
**Charlottetown Family of Schools**

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## PREFACE

This Review of Schools Report (“**Review**”) has been initiated to address significant residential development in the greater Charlottetown area as it impacts the Charlottetown Family of Schools. While PEI has witnessed population growth across PEI (including significant increased numbers of English as an Additional Language students), the schools within the Charlottetown Family of Schools have been prioritized for immediate review due to the major building projects currently underway or proposed for the next few years. These schools include the elementary schools within the Charlottetown Family of Schools (Donagh, Glen Stewart, L. M. Montgomery, Parkdale, Prince Street, Sherwood, Spring Park, St. Jean, Stratford, West Kent and West Royalty), the three Intermediate schools (Birchwood, Queen Charlotte and Stonepark) and the two high schools (Charlottetown Rural and Colonel Gray).

When reviewing current functional capacities and the impact of enrolment growth on the schools, it is necessary to assess the status of each school and determine where capacity may be stretched or exceeded.

The construction of the new high school in Stratford will be an important component of the high school section of the Review. It will relocate high school students in the Donagh and Stratford school zones from their current zoned high school, Charlottetown Rural, to the new school.

Following the completion of the Review of the Charlottetown Family of Schools, a future Review of Schools Report will explore demographic and/or capacity concerns at remaining PSB schools across PEI.

## AUTHORITY

In accordance with the **Education Act**, the PSB is responsible for delivering approved educational programs and services, ensuring its schools are safe and ensuring the effective management of the PSB’s resources. In addition, the PSB **School Review Policy** establishes that the Director of the PSB (Director) shall conduct a review of schools on a regular basis to consider any issues (i.e. physical, programming, capacity, financial, demographic, etc.) and make recommendations for the Board of Directors (Board) to consider. The Director may recommend to the Board that:

- A. The status quo at the school(s) be maintained;
- B. The status quo be maintained, but that the situation at the school(s) be monitored; or
- C. A more in-depth study of the schools(s) be done, and options for change be explored.

If a resolution to consider a change to a school(s) is passed by the Board, the Director will conduct a study and prepare a Study Report which will involve consultation with affected parties.

## INTRODUCTION

The Public Schools Branch is committed to ensuring that its students have access to quality education programs and services and that its learning environments are healthy, safe and effective places for students and staff. This commitment requires the PSB to continually ensure that it is maximizing the use of all available resources. The Review of Schools Report is a document that provides an overview of identified schools and serves as a valuable tool that highlights challenges, informs decisions and guides planning.

PSB School Review Policy states:

“S. 4.2 - A Review of Schools Report should include an overview of the nature of the challenges faced by the school(s) being reviewed. They may, for example, arise from:

- (a) Physical issues
- (b) Program issues
- (c) Capacity issues**
- (d) Financial issues
- (e) Demographic issues
- (f) Such other issues as the Director deems relevant

Using current enrolment numbers for each school in the Charlottetown Family of Schools and the projected enrolments as well as information on planned residential developments, this Review will focus on **capacity** as its priority consideration.

Over the past number of years, student enrolment in several schools has continued to increase causing pressure on the school's functional capacity and thus impacting the available space for teaching and learning, program offerings, and the delivery of key services. While there have been significant capital investments in school infrastructure through improvements to existing facilities, building expansions and a new high school under construction, population growth in the area and the increasing number of support services for students continues to challenge the capacity of our schools.

In terms of projected enrolments, the Public Schools Branch uses data provided by Baragar Systems - a Canadian software company that uses information from the PSB Student Information System, the PEI Birth Registry, Canada Revenue Agency data on Canada Child Benefits and our own PSB information on residential developments across our school zones. This collection of data is used to predict enrolment changes across our schools and has demonstrated good reliability over many years in PEI.

This report focuses on the schools within the Charlottetown Family of Schools due to significant residential development that is currently underway or planned to occur in the capital region within the next few years. This report will address present day challenges as well as projected space shortages in a number of our schools.

Discussions with planning department officials at the provincial and municipal levels were held to review proposals and plans for residential growth (single detached, duplex, multi-unit and apartments). Funding incentive programs and housing strategies from the federal and provincial governments designed to promote housing developments were also reviewed for their implications. Historical data on population growth through interprovincial moves and immigration in addition to PEI's birth rate served to highlight the potential issues surrounding school capacity should efforts to increase this space not be forthcoming in a timely manner. Attention was also given to the substantial increase in the number of English as an Additional Language student population (approximately 3,800 students provincially receiving support as of March 2024) and the concomitant need for appropriate spaces in our schools to appropriately deliver this critical support.

Preliminary meetings were held with school administrators in those schools identified as having the most serious capacity issues for the purpose of reviewing the challenges of accommodating steady and

significant student population growth, both in classrooms and support areas. These schools included L. M. Montgomery Elementary, West Royalty Elementary, and St. Jean Elementary. A discussion was also held with the principal of Sherwood Elementary to ascertain the progress on the new building as well as general population growth in that area. Telephone conversations were held with the remainder of the school administrators in the Charlottetown Family of Schools to provide an overview of this Review and their upcoming involvement in this process. Upon Board approval of the recommendations in this Review, further discussions will be held with administrators, school and district staff, parent groups, students and other agencies to further outline specific needs and possible solutions.

## **OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS**

The Public Schools Branch analyzes enrolment data trends in relation to each school's functional capacity. The term functional capacity is difficult to define, especially in our current teaching learning environment. Basically, the traditional model of comparing available classrooms with student enrolment is a model that neglects to take into account the many support services and individual/small group programs that have been implemented in our schools over the past decade. A school's official capacity number is determined by counting the number of classrooms and multiplying by the average number of students for that space, taking into consideration the square footage of the space. This number does not fully take into account the additional space that schools now require to support individual or small group learning and provide a variety of programs and services to support students. Currently, spaces such as computer labs, staging areas, cafeterias, libraries, etc., are being used as classrooms or instructional spaces to accommodate the support programs. These are not ideal learning spaces and it is also impacting the utilization of these spaces for their intended purpose. Therefore, the term functional capacity needs to be considered against the teaching and learning environments of today's system. To be specific, there is a need for literacy and numeracy rooms, areas for resource groups, outside agencies, and students with exceptional/high needs. The proposed Review and possible Study Report may well result in a different model of computing the capacity of each school.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Donagh Regional**

Donagh had an enrolment of 228 students in September 2023 and increased slightly to 234 by the end of February 2024. With a functional capacity of 244, Donagh is near capacity but Baragar projections suggest it to remain viable as is for the next 15 years. There are concerns, however, with having sufficient space to accommodate individualized and/or small group support.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO AT DONAGH REGIONAL BE MAINTAINED BUT THAT THE SITUATION BE MONITORED.**

### **2. Glen Stewart Primary**

With a September enrolment of 464 and a February total of 470 students, Glen Stewart Primary is well below its functional capacity of 600 students. The projected enrolment numbers suggest Glen Stewart Primary to be within their capacity for the present time although a recently

announced initiative by the Gray Group (Crossroads) to gradually develop 3,200 residential units over the next 15-20 years, together with a steady increase in local residential development across the Stratford catchment area, will warrant monitoring of the school population.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO BE MAINTAINED BUT THAT THE SITUATION AT GLEN STEWART ELEMENTARY BE MONITORED.**

**3. L. M. Montgomery Elementary**

With a current enrolment of 548 (March 13/24) and a functional capacity of 680, L.M. Montgomery is currently using all classrooms to deliver basic programming. In addition, the demand for support programming through the use of teachers and support staff is being met by utilizing every available non-classroom space (teacher prep rooms, specialist offices, library ancillary areas, literacy lab, and resource rooms) on a shared basis. Despite the recent addition in 2020 of 10 classrooms, the school is already over capacity and continues to increase enrolment every month.

Located in one of the fastest growing residential areas, L.M. Montgomery has several residential developments in its immediate neighbourhood as well as new developments continuing to expand in its broader catchment zone: for example, the Montgomery Heights subdivision continues to add more lots such as 90 approved in November 2023 or 23 additional lots in the Maryland Subdivision and another 13 residential lots on Tracey's Lane (Pleasant Grove). These lots are in addition to the steady growth along both sides of St. Peter's Road.

Another consideration may be the recently announced development in Hillsborough Park. While currently zoned for St. Jean, the significant enrolment anticipated from this development of 1,200 to 1,400 residential units cannot be accommodated at St. Jean. Although St. Jean has a capacity of 438 students and has only 90 students at the present time, it provides significant space for other programs and services that could be difficult to relocate. While considering challenges and possible alternatives for L.M. Montgomery, the current student population as well as new growth in Hillsborough Park should be included for review.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT A MORE IN-DEPTH STUDY BE COMPLETED FOR L. M. MONTGOMERY ELEMENTARY, AND THAT OPTIONS FOR CHANGE BE EXPLORED.**

**4. Parkdale Elementary School**

The student enrolment at Parkdale in September 2023 was 144 and increased to 152 by the end of February 2024. With the functional capacity of the school at 200 students and projected enrolments to remain at approximately 150 students over the next several years, the school should be able to accommodate limited growth from any new residential developments or transfers into their catchment area. Space to accommodate a French classroom as well as dedicated spaces for individual or small group support continue to be challenges within the current school.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO AT PARKDALE ELEMENTARY BE MAINTAINED BUT THAT THE SITUATION BE MONITORED.**

**5. Prince Street Elementary**

Currently with a student enrolment of 207 (February 28, 2024) and a functional capacity of 358, the school is not under any undue pressure for classroom space at this time. However, adequate space for small group and individualized programming support continues to be a challenge.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO AT PRINCE STREET ELEMENTARY BE MAINTAINED BUT THAT THE SITUATION BE MONITORED.**

**6. Sherwood Elementary**

A new Sherwood Elementary is being constructed with an anticipated opening during the next school year. The current enrolment is 533 (February 2024) and the functional capacity of the new school is estimated at 650 students. Although there are residential projects such as the 1,100 apartment units and 100 townhouses being developed behind the Royalty Crossing Mall that could increase student numbers dramatically over time, overcapacity is not seen as an immediate issue.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO BE MAINTAINED AT SHERWOOD ELEMENTARY BUT THAT THE SITUATION BE MONITORED.**

**7. Spring Park Elementary**

Current enrolment at Spring Park is 464 (February 2024) with a functional capacity of 500. Although it does experience some degree of student movement in and out of the school, the latest projected enrolments through 2038 would suggest classroom capacity will not be an issue. However, adequate space for small group and individualized programming support continues to be a challenge.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO AT SPRING PARK ELEMENTARY BE MAINTAINED BUT THAT THE SITUATION BE MONITORED.**

**8. St. Jean Elementary**

The student enrolment at the end of February 2024 was 90 with a functional capacity of 438. However, the capacity number is not an accurate depiction of the school as it hosts a significant number of other programs and services that utilize most of its space. Trending forward, the student numbers may change drastically as the new residential development (1,200 – 1,400 units in Hillsborough Park) comes to fruition as it is in the present St. Jean catchment area. However, even by relocating all of the non-school programs from St. Jean, there would be insufficient space for the new students from Hillsborough Park.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT A MORE IN-DEPTH STUDY BE COMPLETED FOR ST. JEAN ELEMENTARY, AND THAT OPTIONS FOR CHANGE BE EXPLORED.**

**9. Stratford Elementary**

Stratford Elementary started the year with 648 and had 649 students at the end of February with a functional capacity of 693. The numbers suggest Stratford Elementary to be within their capacity for the present time although a recently announced initiative by the Gray Group (Crossroads) to gradually develop 3,200 residential units over the next 15-20 years, together with a steady increase in local residential development across the Stratford catchment area, will warrant monitoring of the school population.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO BE MAINTAINED BUT THAT THE SITUATION AT STRATFORD ELEMENTARY BE MONITORED.**

**10. West Kent Elementary**

West Kent currently has 314 students (February 2024) and a functional capacity of 376 so enrolment, currently and projected, is within the expected space allocation for the school. However, adequate space for small group and individualized programming support continues to be a challenge.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO AT WEST KENT ELEMENTARY BE MAINTAINED BUT THAT THE SITUATION BE MONITORED.**

**11. West Royalty Elementary**

This school is in a situation similar to L. M. Montgomery in that it is found within a rapidly growing residential area with many existing developments currently expanding or new developments getting underway. Within its catchment area, a large number of developments have been identified by local planning authorities. If all came to completion, over 2,500 lots could be made available for new residents over the next few years.

Starting in September 2023 with 592 students and now at 624 (March 13, 2024), a combination of 30 class groups and extensive student support programs has meant the school has reached its functional capacity of 700. The school experiences significant transfers in and out (over 100 students have entered this school since September 2023 and approximately 70 have left). The newest addition of 10 classrooms in 2022 have been completely utilized. There are 2 portable classrooms attached to the main building being used for a special Student Services program (PELP) serving a number of local schools that could be reclaimed by the school if space could be found in another facility for the current students in those areas.

In addition to the foreseeable demand for additional space to address the growing enrolment, a major concern of school administration and staff is the lack of sufficient small instructional spaces for individual and small group programming to meet the diverse and challenging needs of its student population. Like L.M. Montgomery, all available space (including an entryway) is currently used by professional staff to deliver these programs, often in areas less than ideal for success.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT A MORE IN-DEPTH STUDY BE COMPLETED FOR WEST ROYALTY ELEMENTARY, AND THAT OPTIONS FOR CHANGE BE EXPLORED.**

**12. Birchwood Intermediate**

The school had an enrolment of 591 in September 2023 and, with a number of in and out transfers, was 591 at the end of February 2024. With a functional capacity is 594, the school is basically full with all of its instructional spaces being used at the present time. Baragar projections through 2038 suggest minimal change in any increase or decrease in school population despite being the intermediate school for the growing Stratford zone. However, the Baragar numbers may not totally include the most recent developments underway or proposed and therefore this school should continue to be monitored. As well, the school faces challenges in providing dedicated space for individualized and small group support.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO BE MAINTAINED AT BIRCHWOOD INTERMEDIATE BUT THAT THE SITUATION SCHOOL BE MONITORED.**

**13. Queen Charlotte Intermediate**

As was indicated in the 2023 Study Report as reported by former Director Norbert Carpenter in March 2023, this school continues to have enrolment levels above its functional capacity. In September 2024, the enrolment was 648 and, by February, had increased to 683. The functional capacity remains at 620. Baragar projections indicate a continued moderate growth through to 2038 with numbers ranging from 680 to 700. Again, current and proposed residential developments within its catchment area and the steady rise in elementary populations may in fact increase student numbers beyond those projected.

While the school has been creative in addressing its current overcapacity, more space is needed to adequately and properly deliver programming and support. Nearly \$17 million has been approved by the Government of PEI for Queen Charlotte to provide additional classrooms and other program spaces. Although there is no completion date as yet (the Planning Committee has just been formed to determine spaces needed and proposed timelines), the school will continue to make internal adjustments as needed in the meantime. Given the continued growth in the greater Charlottetown area and expected enrolment increases at the Queen Charlotte feeder schools (notably, West Royalty), there may be a need to monitor this school to ensure the announced additional space will be a viable solution for the longer term.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO BE MAINTAINED AT QUEEN CHARLOTTE INTERMEDIATE BUT THAT THE SITUATION BE MONITORED.**

**14. Stonepark Intermediate**

Starting September with 776 students and ending February 2024 with 778 students suggests a fairly steady enrolment. Coupled with a functional capacity of 810, the school is approaching capacity but is not, as yet, subject to overcapacity issues.



However, having a catchment area that includes L. M. Montgomery, Sherwood, part of Parkdale and Donagh suggests it will also be impacted by the many developments within those zones and therefore should be regularly monitored for enrolment growth.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE STATUS QUO BE MAINTAINED AT STONEPARK INTERMEDIATE BUT THAT THE SITUATION BE MONITORED.**

**15. Charlottetown Rural High**

Starting September 2023 with 1197 students, it has decreased marginally to 1186 in February. The functional capacity of the Rural is 950. Obviously, there are concerns over space and program delivery. However, the opening of the new Stratford High will address this issue by relocating students from the Donagh and Stratford catchment areas. If the change had occurred this year, 114 students from the Donagh area and 476 students from the Stratford zone would have been attending Stratford, not Charlottetown Rural. This overall decrease of nearly 600 students would have made a dramatic difference in the enrolment at Charlottetown Rural (leaving a population of almost 50% or 600 students at the Rural).

Given the construction of the new high school in Stratford and the impact at Charlottetown Rural, there may be opportunities to address the enrolments at both Charlottetown Rural and Colonel Gray. Through examining catchment areas and looking for a better balance of enrolments at the two high schools, functional capacity limitations could be addressed for both facilities.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT A MORE IN-DEPTH STUDY BE COMPLETED FOR CHARLOTTETOWN RURAL HIGH AND THAT OPTIONS FOR CHANGE BE EXPLORED.**

**16. Colonel Gray Senior High**

Colonel Gray opened school in September 2023 with 960 students and increased to 977 by the end of February 2024. With a functional capacity of 950, the school exceeds its capacity slightly. The impact of any future developments within its catchment area (the school zones of Birchwood and Queen Charlotte) may cause overcapacity unless action is taken to find alternative solutions.

Similar to Charlottetown Rural, the new high school in Stratford will create an opportunity to consider the enrollment numbers among the three high schools.

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT A MORE IN-DEPTH STUDY BE COMPLETED FOR COLONEL GRAY SENIOR HIGH, AND THAT OPTIONS FOR CHANGE BE EXPLORED.**

SUMMARY

<b>STATUS QUO</b>	<b>STATUS QUO BUT MONITOR</b>	<b>IN-DEPTH STUDY</b>
	Donagh Regional	L. M. Montgomery Elementary
*all schools report concerns	Glen Stewart Primary	St. Jean Elementary
with adequate and appropriate	Parkdale Elementary	West Royalty Elementary
dedicated space for support	Prince Street Elementary	Charlottetown Rural High
programming and services	Sherwood Elementary	Colonel Gray Senior High
	Spring Park Elementary	
	Stratford Elementary	
	West Kent Elementary	
	Birchwood Intermediate	
	Queen Charlotte Intermediate	
	Stonepark Intermediate	

**\*\*As many of these schools share common catchment areas or are adjacent to one another, the Study Report may, of necessity, include discussions with neighbouring schools and recommendations may be more extensive than being contained or restricted to one school.**

**Reference:**

***Board Governance Policy (GP 14) - School Review, June 26, 2019***

***Education Act***

***Baragar Enrolment Projections (2023)***

***PSB Review of Schools Study Report (March 27, 2023)***

***PEI Housing Corporation 2023-2025 Action Plan***

***Growing Together: A Population Framework for Prince Edward Island***